

Supported Employment Leadership Network (SELN)
Meeting

Date: September 23, 2015
Location: Sanders Building, Room 207
Time: 10:00-3:00 pm

Attendees: Kelly McNurlin (DDP), Dave Eaton (Counterpoint Inc.), Chanda Hermanson-Dudley (VRBS), Jennifer Finnegan (DDP), Mike Hermanson (Disability Transitions), Charlie Briggs (Easter Seals Goodwill), Bill Harant (SILC)

Phone Attendees: Lori Idland (DRM), Diane Reidelbach (Job Connections), Pete Hailey (RSS)

Roll Call and Opening Remarks:

- Introductions were made throughout the room and by participants on the phone.
- Because of the diversity in the web poll on people's schedules and mostly room availability, it did not work out to have a consistent day/week for our meetings. Kelly tried to schedule them on different days of the week so everyone could participate some of the time. She handed out the SELN meeting schedule for the rest of the fiscal year:
 - October 28, 2015 – Rm 207
 - November 17, 2015 – Rm 107
 - December 9, 2015 – Rm 207
 - January 7, 2016 – Rm 107
 - February 10, 2016 – Rm 207
 - March 15, 2016 – Rm 207
 - April 27, 2016 – Rm 207
 - May 26, 2016 – Rm 207
 - June 15, 2016 – Rm 107

Continue Work on DDP Career Plan re-vamp:

- Kelly handed out a copy of the career plan with edits from last meeting and we talked about further changes. The plan is to present our final recommendations to DD Management. This is still in a very rough draft form right now. When it's close to final, it will be sent to all core members for final input.
- Group re-visited the career plan and brainstormed more suggestions/changes. Further revisions will be discussed next month.
- Miscellaneous Discussions
 - Chanda brought up the Montana Career Information System (MCIS) that is currently being used by VR and Dept of Labor. It is used to develop career plans as well as has a component in there for financial planning. Not all components have to be filled in and we could use the system for DD clients which could start with the DD Case manager and continue to the VR Counselor, etc.

- Idea brought up of doing a supported employment consumer survey as part of the pre-PSP, either a new one or just an added section to the existing one. Suggested we look at Oregon because they have something similar as to what we might want.

Novelene's request for workgroup to address:

Flexibility within cost plans for employment needs: how can an individual's cost plan be more responsive to employment needs while staying within the current resource allocation? What changes could be made to the current 0208 waiver definitions to make employment more flexible?

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS:

ACCESS OTHER POTENTIAL PROGRAMS OR SUPPORTS: (in no particular order)

- Ticket to Work – This could be a resource in the future, but would take a lot of commitment and several years to build up.
Discussion:
 - Mike Hermanson said that his experience with Ticket to Work funds is that they are hard to access because of many stipulations. A person has an agreed-upon timeframe, and needs to reach a goal of reducing or eliminating dependence on SSI and/or SSDI, otherwise VR does not see any money back from the Feds. These stipulations can be challenging for individuals with DD individuals there is decreased potential to access the funds. He mentioned as well that there are no Ticket to Work providers besides VR in Montana
 - We will talk to low population states to see if they could get it to work and if so, how.
 - Would help to create a road map at what a successful one looks like.
 - Talk to Laurel Gebo as they were attempting to do the program at Easter Seals.
- PASS Plans - Plan to Achieve Self Support - where the individual can put money aside for a specific items or services needed to achieve a specific work goal, and it won't count as income toward **Substantial Gainful Activity SGA** (used to determine SSI/SSDI benefits)
Discussion:
 - If the person receives SSI and has another income source (SSDI for example), and if the person can live on SSI only, they can use their other income or SSDI funding for supports to help them to start looking for work
 - Has to be a pretty specific plan to reach SGA, and attainment of your work goal must reduce or eliminate SSI or SSDI benefits
 - They have seen payment for job coaching written into PASS plans. Also, buying vehicles and modifying vehicles have been part of some PASS plans in MT

- To qualify the individual is required to have a plan to get to substantial gainful activity and sometimes these plans get rejected.
 - Chanda will get a list of people who currently write PASS plans and invite one to come to our meeting and give us a better understanding of how it can work for our population.
 - We will look at successful PASS plans and see what they look like, how they worked, and why they worked. PASS plans are short term in nature (usually 2-5 years). The plan stops when the individual purchases the equipment or whatever they were saving for.
 - We will research what happens when someone does not achieve their final goal. Do they pay \$\$ back?
- IRWE - Impairment Related Work Expenses – Items or services that, because of a disability, one needs and uses in order to work. Excluded from earnings when determining SGA. Must be paid by the individual and must be directly related to their disability.

Discussion:

 - Has to be developed by a Certified Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC).
 - Person will need to keep receipts etc. A specific and detailed ‘plan’ is not required, but the IRWE expenses must be approved by the CWIC
- Assistive Technology – Make sure people are assessing if technology can be helpful. There are many apps that help reduce or eliminate the need for staff in monitoring performance.

Discussion:

 - Underutilized resource in Montana
 - More people should be requesting evaluations by MonTech
 - The CWICs usually know what the person is qualified to access
- Referral to VR, or **back to VR** - Voc Rehab’s purpose is to maximize someone’s employment potential. This applies to people who do not have jobs, but also to people who DO have jobs and may not be at their full employment potential.

Discussion:

 - If someone does not have a job, then a VR referral is the usual standard. BUT, even if someone already has a job a VR referral might be appropriate and beneficial if the person:
 - ✓ might benefit from assistive technology
 - ✓ if the person has a work goal and has a disability that causes barriers to their work goal
 - ✓ if they are at jeopardy of losing their current job
 - ✓ the person wants to expand the number of hours they work or change jobs
- ABLE Act – This was brought up as a possibility, but none of the attendees know a lot about it.

CHANGES WITHIN DD INVOICE & COST PLAN SYSTEMS

- Discussed a prior idea presented by DDP a while ago that we put all employment services under 1 category in the ICP system. This would provide more flexibility in invoicing and would cut back on moving money around in cost plans.
 - On this point Kelly did bring up that with MMIS coming the process will change from what we are doing now, and changing our current AWACS/ICP would cost a lot of money and may not be approved since we will no longer use those two systems within the next few years.
 - Moving money constantly between Day and Employment is tough and time consuming. Flexibility in broadening those categories would be helpful.
 - This option would not solve the issue that there is frequently not a way to free enough money in other services because the rates aren't a dollar for dollar correlation
- Talked further about bringing back discretionary funds for regions, however that would increase cost plans. Also would benefit if underutilized money could go between individual cost plans like in the past.
 - Maybe funds that are underutilized consistently in cost plans could be returned to the state and providers could put in for additional funds for other clients? Or have a "needs lists" of people that need additional funding for SE. We will look into other states and how they address this issue.

We will look at the service definitions next meeting and see if there are any suggestions.

Potential Projects:

- Conduct trainings for providers, job coaches, case managers, and families on assistive technology.
- Public Announcements
- Decided to fund DD case managers/FSS's registration to attend the MTYouthTransition Conference in Great Falls November 4-6. In looking at the registration info after our meeting, the maximum reimbursement will be \$125.00 (early bird rate) per person.
- Decided to fund 1 provider registration for each DD provider to attend the Montana Association for Rehabilitation (MAR) conference October 21-23, 2015 at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel in Helena.

Next Meeting will be on Wednesday October 28, 2015 in the Sanders Building, room 207